A LETTER OF THE MINISTERS of the City of LONDON,

Presented the first of *Ian.* 1645. to the Reverend Assembly of

DIVINES

Sitting at *Westminster* by Authority of *Parliament*,

AGAINST

TOLERATION.

LONDON,
Printed for SAMUEL GELLIBRAND at the Brasen Serpent in *Pauls* Church-yard, 1645.

A LETTER

OF THE

MINISTERS

of the City of

LONDON

Presented the first of Jan. 1644. to the

Reverend Assembly of

DIVINES

Sitting at Westminster by Authority of Parliament,

TOLERATION.

LONDON,

Printed for SAMUEL GELLIBRAND at the Brazen Serpent in Pauls Church-yard, 1645.

Rad 21

To our Reverend, Learned, and Religious Brethren the Prolocutor and the reſt of the Divines aſſembled and now ſitting at *Weſtminſter* by Authority of Parliament, theſe preſent.

Reverend and beloved Brethren,

WEe are exceedingly apprehenſive of the deſireableneſſe of the Churches peace, and of the pleaſantneſſe of Brethrens unity, knowing that when peace is ſet upon its proper baſis, *viz.* Righteouſneſſe and Truth, it is one of the beſt poſſeſſions, both delectable and profitable; like *Aarons* ointment, and the dew of *Hermon*. It is true, by reaſon of different lights and different ſights among Brethren, there may be diſſenting in opinion; yet why ſhould there be any ſeparating from Church-communion? The Churches coat may be of divers colours, yet why ſhould there be any rent in it? Have we not a touchſtone of truth, the good word of God; and when all things are examined by that word, then that which is beſt may be held faſt; but firſt they muſt be knowne and then examined afterward. If our diſſenting Brethren after ſo many importunate entreaties, would have been perſwaded (either in zeale to the truth, or in ſincere love to the Churches peace and unity among Brethren, or in reſpect to their owne reputation by faire and ingennous dealing, or in conſcience to their promiſe made with the Miniſters of *London* now five years ſince, or any ſuch like reaſonable conſideration) at laſt to have given us a full narrative of their opinions, and grounds of their ſeparation, wee are perſwaded they would not have ſtood

ſtood at ſuch a diſtance from us as now they do; But they choſe rather to walk by their own private lights then to unboſome themſelves to us their moſt affectionate Brethren, and to ſet themſelves in an untrodden way of their own, rather then to wait what our covenanted Reformation, according to the word of God and examples of the beſt Reformed Churches would bring forth. But the offence doth not end here, it is much that our Brethren ſhould ſeparate from the Church, but that they ſhould endeavour to get a warrant to authorize their ſeparation from it, and to have liberty (by drawing members out of it) to weaken and diminiſh it, till (ſo farre as lies in them) they have brought it to nothing; this we think to be plainly unlawfull, yet this we underſtand is their preſent deſign and endeavour. Wherefore (Reverend Brethren) having had ſuch large experience of your zeale of Gods glory, your care of his afflicted Church, your earneſt endeavours to promote the compleat Reformation of it, and of your ready concurrence with us in the improvement of any meanes that might be found conducible to this end; we are bold to hint unto you theſe our enſuing Reaſons againſt the Toleration of Independency in this Church.

I The deſires and endeavors of *Independents* for a Toleration are at this time extreamly unſeaſonable and præproperous: for,

1. The Reformation of Religion is not yet perfected and ſetled among us according to our Covenant. And why may not the Reformation be raiſed up at laſt to ſuch purity and perfection that truly tender Conſciences may receive abundant ſatisfaction for ought that yet appeares?

2. It is not yet known what the government of the *Independents* is, neither would they ever yet vouchſafe to let the world know what they hold in that point, though ſome of their party have been too forward to chalenge the *London* Petitioners as *led with blinde obedience, and pinning their ſoules upon the Prieſts ſleeve*, for deſiring an eſtabliſhment of the Government of Chriſt, before there was any modell of it extant.

3. Wee can hardly bee perſwaded, that the *Independents* themſelves (after all the ſtirres they have made amongſt us)

are

Rad 91

are as yet fully resolved about their owne way wherewith they would bee concluded, seeing they publish not their modell (though they are nimble enough in publishing other things) and they professe Reserves, and New lights, for which they will (no doubt) expect the like toleration, and so *in infinitum*. It were more seasonable to move for toleration when once they are positively determined how farre they meane to goe, and where they meane to stay.

II Their desires and endeavours are unreasonable and unequall in divers regards.

1. Partly because no such toleration hath hitherto beene established (so farre as we know) in any Christian State by the civill Magistrate.

2. Partly because some of them have solemnly profest that they cannot suffer Presbytery, and answerable hereunto is their practice in those places where Independency prevailes.

3. And partly because to grant to them and not to other Sectaries who are free born as well as they, and have done as good service as they to the publike (as they use to plead) will be counted injustice and great partiality; but to grant it unto all will scarce be cleared from great impiety.

III Independency is a Schisme, for

1. *Independents* doe depart from our Churches, being true Churches, and so acknowledged by themselves

2. They draw and seduce our members from our Congregations.

3. They erect separate Congregations under a separate and undiscovered government.

4. They refuse communion with our Churches in the Sacraments.

5. Their Ministers refuse to preach among us as Officers.

6. Their members, if at any time they joyn with us in hearing the word and prayer, yet they do it not as with the ministeriall word and prayer, nor as acts of Church-communion.

Now wee judge that no Schism is to be tolerated in the Church, † σχίσματα, 1 Cor. 1.10. 1 Cor. 12.25. * διχοστασίας Rom. 16.17. with 1 Cor. 3.3. Gal. 5.20. † Schismes * Divisions

IV Many mischiefes will inevitably follow upon this Toleration,

ration, and that both to Church and Commonwealth.

First, To the Church, as,

1 Causeleſſe and unjuſt revolts from our Miniſtry and Congregations.

2 Our peoples mindes will be troubled, and in danger to be ſubverted, as *Acts* 15.24.

3 Bitter heart burnings among brethren will be fomented and perpetuated to poſterity.

4 The godly painfull and Orthodox Miniſtry will be diſcouraged and deſpiſed.

5 The life and power of godlineſſe will be eaten out by frivolous diſputes and vaine janglings.

6 The whole courſe of Religion in private families will be interrupted and undermined.

7 Reciprocall duties between perſons of neareſt and deareſt relations will be extreamely violated.

8 The whole work of Reformation eſpecially in diſcipline and Government will be retarded, diſturbed, and in danger of being made utterly fruſtrate and void, whilſt every perſon ſhall have liberty upon every triviall diſcontent at Presybteriall Government and Churches, to revolt from us and liſt themſelves in ſeparated Congregations.

9. All other Sects and Hereſies in the Kingdome will be encouraged to endeavour the like toleration.

10. All other Sects and Hereſies in the Kingdome will ſafeguard and ſhelter themſelves under the wings of *Independency*, and ſome of the *Independents* in their books have openly avowed, that they plead for liberty of conſcience as well for others as themſelves.

11. And the whole Church of *England* in ſhort time will be ſwallowed up with diſtraction and confuſion, but God is not *the Author* of confuſion but of peace, 1 *Cor.* 14.33.

Secondly, To the Common-Wealth. For,

1. All theſe miſchiefes in the Church will have their proportionable influence upon the Common-Wealth.

2. The Kingdome will be wofully weakned by ſcandals and Diviſions, ſo that the enemies of it both Domeſticall and Forreign will be encouraged to plot and practice againſt it,

3. It

Rud 21

3. It is much to be doubted, leſt the power of the Magiſtrate, ſhould not onely bee weakened, but even utterly overthrown, conſidering the principles and practices of *Independents*, together with their compliance with other Sectaries, ſufficiently known to be Anti-Magiſtraticall.

V. Such a Toleration is utterly repugnant and inconſiſtent with that ſolemn League and Covenant for Reformation and defence of Religion, which not onely both Houſes of Parliament, but alſo perſons of all ſorts in both Kingdomes of *England* and *Scotland*, have ſubſcribed and with hands lifted up to the moſt high God have ſworn: Which Covenant likewiſe both you, and we, and thoſe that moſt earneſtly purſue the eſtabliſhment of this Toleration, have made, (or ſhould have made) *in the preſence of Almighty God the ſearcher of all hearts, with a true intention to perform the ſame as we ſhall anſwer at that great day, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be diſcloſed.* For

1. This is oppoſite to the Reformation of Religion *according to the Word of God, and the example of the beſt Reformed Churches*, Article 1.

2. It is deſtructive to the three Kingdomes *neareſt conjunction and uniformity in Religion and Government, which might leade us and our poſterity after us as brethren to live in faith and love*, Art. 1.

3. It is plainely contrary to that extirpation of *Schiſm, and whatſoever ſhall bee found contrary to ſound Doctrine, and the power of Godlineſſe*, which we have ſworn *ſincerely, really, and conſtantly to endeavour without reſpect of perſons*, Art. 2.

4. Hereby we ſhall be involved in *the guilt of other mens ſins, and thereby be endangered to receive of their plagues*, Art. 3.

5. It ſeemes utterly impoſſible (if ſuch a toleration ſhould be granted) that the *Lord ſhould be one, and his name one in the three Kingdomes*, Art. 2.

6. This will palpably *hinder the Reformation of Religion*; Inevitably *divide one Kingdome from another*, and unhappily *make factions and parties among the people, contrary to this League and Covenant*, of which evill offices whoſoever ſhall be found guilty, are reputed in the words of the Covenant, *Incendiaries, Malignants, or evill inſtruments to be diſcovered, that*

that they may be brought to publike tryall, and receive condigne punishment, Art. 4. and 5.

These are some of the many considerations which make deep impression upon our Spirits against that great *Diana* of *Independents*, and all the Sectaries so much cryed up by them in these distracted times, *viz. A Toleration, A Toleration*. And however, none should have more rejoyced then our selves in the establishment of a brotherly, peaceable and Christian Accommodation: yet this being utterly rejected by them, wee cannot dissemble how upon the forementioned grounds, wee detest and abhorre the much endeavoured Toleration. Our bowels, our bowels are stirred within us, and we could even drown our selves in teares, when we call to minde how long and sharp a travell this Kingdome hath been in for many yeares together to bring forth that blessed fruit of a pure and perfect Reformation, and now at last after all our pangs and dolors and expectations, this reall and thorough Reformation, is in danger of being strangled in the birth by a lawlesse Toleration that strives to be brought forth before it.

Wherefore (Reverend and beloved Brethren) we could not satisfie our selves till wee had made some discovery of our thoughts unto you about this matter, not that we can harbour the least jealousie of your zeale, fidelity, or industry in the opposing and extirpating of such a root of gall and bitternesse as Toleration is and will be, both in present and future ages; but that we may what lies in us endeavour mutually to strengthen one anothers resolutions against the present growing evills, and that our consciences may not smite us another day for sinfull silence, or sluggish deficiency in any point of duty tending to the glory of Christ, honour of the truth, peace of the Church perfection of Reformation, performance of our Covenant, and benefit of present and succeeding generations.

Subscribed by us your affectionate bre-
thren and Fellow-labourers in the
work of the Ministery, to whom
truth and peace is very precious.

From Sion Coll. London
Decemb. 18. 1645.

FINIS.

Rad 21

A Numb. 15. 9

CONTINVATION

Of certain speciall an Remarkable passages informed to the PARLIAMENT, and otherwise from divers parts of this Kingdom, from Friday the 26. of *Decem.* till Friday the 2. of *January* 1645. *viz.*

1. Sir William Brerctons *meeting the Enemie with* 2000. *horse and a great fight with a partee from* Worcester *and other Garrisons, the number that were killed, and the Enemie put to flight.*

2. *A further Relation of the Propositions or letter sent by the King, with the List of the Earles, Lords therein named, and an answer to be returned.*

3. *The Enemies falling upon a Garrison of ours in Shropshire, and in what manner they were beaten off, their plundering the towne of* Rockerdine *and burning thereof.*

4. *The taking* 20. *of* Ludlow *horse, and seizing of the Colepits that served that Town, and the sallying out of* Plymouth, *and taking many Cattell, and diverse Prisoners.*

5. *The neere ingagement of* Sir Thomas Fairfax *with the Enemy in the West, The severall quarters and the Enemies Rendevouze, of the Landing of Danes in Scotland, and other things not before related.*

LONDON, Printed for *P. L.* and are to be sold in the Old Baily.

Beginning the 26. *of December.*

BY a Letter out of Shropshire gives us an account of the enemies falling upon a Garrison of ours, and how they were beaten backe, and the Town burnt which is thus imparted to us.

SIR;

THe Enemy hath been very active in these parts of late, and for some time have kept such forces as they could draw out of severall Garrisons in those parts into a